

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

setting license parameters associated with at least one network resource, said license parameters including using-load-balancing criteria-in-conjunction-with-the-license parameters;

receiving a request to access the network resource;

determining if the license parameters will permit the requested access to the network resource; and

granting the requested access to the network resource if it is determined that the license parameters permit the requested access to the network resource and providing wherein said granting the access is based at least in part on the load-balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes setting license parameters associated with an application available from at least one server.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes specifying a limit on a number of licensed connections for a plurality of servers.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes allocating licensed access to a plurality of mail servers based on usernames.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes allocating licensed access to mail servers based on geographic information associated with users that request access to the network resource.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising keeping at least one of a local log or syslog to track information associated with licensed connections to the network resource.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising providing third-party access to at least one of the local log or syslog to allow licenses associated with the tracked information stored therein to be remotely managed or monitored.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a warning message if a limit of licensed connections is getting near.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising arranging a plurality of network resources and their associated license parameters according to a master/slave and parent/child arrangement.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:  
a means for setting license parameters associated with at least one network resource, said license parameters including a means for using load-balancing criteria in conjunction with the license parameters;  
a means for receiving a request to access the network resource; and

a means for determining if the license parameters will permit the requested access to the network resource; and a means for granting the requested access to the network resource if it is determined that the license parameters permit the requested access to the network resource and for providing wherein said granting the access is based at least in part on the load-balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the means for setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes a means for setting sets license parameters associated with an application available from at least one server.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the means for setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes a means for specifying specifies a limit on a number of licensed connections for a plurality of servers.

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the means for setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes a means for allocating allocates licensed access to a plurality of mail servers based on usernames; and wherein the means for determining if the license parameters will permit the requested access to the network resource includes:

a means for performing a first handshake procedure between a proxy and a client that provided the request and which is associated with a username;

a means for determining which of the plurality of mail servers is allocated to the client's username;

a means for performing a second handshake procedure between the proxy and the mail server that is allocated to the client's username; and

a means for providing the client with access to that mail server after successful completion of the second handshake procedure.

16. (Original) The system of claim 12, further comprising:

a means for tracking information associated with licensed connections to the network resource; and

a means for providing access to the tracked information.

17. (Original) The system of claim 12, further comprising a means for warning if a limit of licensed connections is being at least approached.

18. (Original) The system of claim 12, further comprising means for arranging a plurality of network resources and their associated license parameters, wherein at least some of these network resources and their associated license parameters can be arranged to allow license management independently of any load balancing.

19. – 34. (Canceled)

35. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said granting the access based at least in part on the load-balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters, includes:

determining a number of total licenses to access each of plural ones of said at least one network resource as set by said license parameters; and

determining which particular one of said plural network resources is to have access granted thereto, alternately with access to other ones of said plural network resources, while still in compliance within said number of total licenses to access each of said plural network resources as set by said license parameters.

36. (New) The system of claim 12 wherein said means for granting grants the access based at least in part on the load-balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters, by:

determining a number of total licenses to access each of plural ones of said at least one network resource as set by said license parameters; and

determining which particular one of said plural network resources is to have access granted thereto, alternately with access to other ones of said plural network resources, while still in compliance within said number of total licenses to access each of said plural network resources as set by said license parameter.

37. (New) An apparatus, comprising:
  - a file adapted to be set with license parameters associated with at least one network resource; and
    - a network device that includes said file, and being adapted to determine if the license parameters that are set in said file permit a requested access to the network resource and adapted to grant the requested access to the network resource if the license parameters are determined to permit the requested access, and wherein said network device is adapted to balance load to said at least one network resource using said license parameters.
38. (New) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said network device is a switch adapted to direct said request to said at least one network resource from among a plurality of network resources communicatively coupled to said switch.
39. (New) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein at least one resource is an email server.
40. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising a data repository, included in said network device and accessible by said network device, to store log information usable by said network device to determine license usage and license compliance.
41. (New) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said network device is adapted to balance load to said at least one network resource using said license parameters, by use of: (a) a determination of a number of total licenses to access each of plural ones of said at least one network resource as set by said license parameters and (b) a determination of which particular

one of said plural network resources is to have access granted thereto, alternately with access to other ones of said plural network resources, while still in compliance within said number of total licenses to access each of said plural network resources as set by said license parameters.

42. (New) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a storage medium storing instructions that are executable by a network device to:  
check license parameter settings associated with at least one network resource;  
determine if the license parameters settings permit a requested access to the at least one network resource; and

grant the requested access to the at least one network resource if the license parameters are determined to permit the requested access, and wherein said grant includes balancing load to the at least one network resource using said license parameters.

43. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 42 wherein said at least one resource is an email server.

44. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 42 wherein said storage medium further stores instructions executable by said network device to:

access a data repository adapted to store log information; and  
use said log information to determine license usage and license compliance.

45. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 42 wherein the instructions executable by said network device to perform said balancing load to the at least one network resource using said license parameters, include instructions to:

determine a number of total licenses to access each of plural ones of said at least one network resource as set by said license parameters; and

determine which particular one of said plural network resources is to have access granted thereto, alternately with access to other ones of said plural network resources, while still

in compliance within said number of total licenses to access each of said plural network resources as set by said license parameters.